Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1516

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, EEWT, BU

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE CHANGE IN SIGNALS ON BULGARIAN COMMERCIAL OFFICE

IN US; TALK WITH NEW HEAD OF FOURTH DEPT

REF: A) SOFIA 1548; B) STATE 165377; C) STATE 102107

1. AMBASSADOR, ACCOMPANIED BY ANDREWS, EUR/EE, CALLED ON PERVEN CHERNEV, NEW DIRECTOR OF MFA FOURTH DEPT (WESTERN EUROPE, US AND CANADA) JULY 29 FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION OF US-GOB RELATIONS. CHERNEV, WHOSE ENGLISH IS GOOD IF A BIT RUSTY FROM LACK OF RECENT USE, SEEMED MUCH MORE ALIVE AND INTERESTED THAN HAD BEEN AVRAMOV WITH WHOM WE HAD DEALT IN EIGHTH DEPT. ALTHOUGH NOTHING OF GREAT SUBSTANCE EVENTUATED, CHERNEV MADE SEVERAL REMARKS THAT HE INTENDS TO WORK "IMAGINATIVELY AND CREATIVELY" FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT AND NORMALIZATION OF OUR RELATIONS. WE ARE MUCH ENCOURAGED BY TRANSFER OF US DESK FROM EIGHTH DEPT, WHICH HAS HAD PRIMARY FOCUS ON LATIN AMERICA AND ESPECIALLY CUBA, TO FORMER WESTERN EUROPE DEPT, AND APPOINTMENT OF SOMEONE OF CHERNEV'S OBVIOUS HIGH CALIBER AND PAST EXPERIENCE IN US AFFAIRS AS ITS NEW HEAD.

2. DURING CONVERSATION CHERNEV SAID GOB IS RE-STUDYING QUESTION OF WHETHER NEW COMMERCIAL OFFICE SHOULD BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LOCATED IN SAN FRANCISCO OR CHICAGO, AND THAT IT MAY WELL

TURN OUT TO BE LATTER CITY. HE REFERRED TO A CONVERSATION HE HAD HAD RECENTLY ON THIS SUBJECT WITH DEPUTY PRIMIN LUKANOV. (AMBASSADOR HAS APPOINTMENT WITH LUKANOV AUG 2.) CHERNEV REQUESTED THAT IN VIEW OF FACT GOB PREFERENCE NOT YET DEFINED, IT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL IF THE WRITTEN CONFIRMATION (WHICH AMBASSADOR POPOV REQUESTED OF DEPUTY ASST SEC ARMITAGE IN THEIR JULY 1 CONVERSATION -- REF B) COULD MERELY PUT IN WRITING WHAT WE HAD TOLD BULGARIANS HERE PURSUANT REF C, THAT THE US APPROVES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ONE COMMERCIAL OFFICE AT THIS TIME, TO BE EITHER IN CHICAGO OR SAN FRANCISCO, AT BULGARIAN OPTION.

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